

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
Serial No. 10/042,321
Sughrue Ref: Q68046

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1 and 6 are independent claims. Applicants have added new claims 12 and 13 in order to provide additional claim coverage.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite. Specifically, it is the Examiner's position that there is an inconsistency between the preamble and body of independent claims 1 and 6.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Okamoto (US 6,343,942). Claims 1, 2, and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Applicant's Admitted Prior Art ("APA"). Claims 3, 4, 9, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over APA in view of Tanigawa (US 6,086,408). Claims 5 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over APA in view of Mews et al. (US 5,931,691).

Applicant's representative John Dresch conducted a telephone interview with Examiner Felix Figueroa on November 20, 2003 to discuss these rejection.

Interview

During a telephone interview, the Examiner indicated that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, should be overcome by rewriting the independent claims to recite, for example, "a monolithic terminal member within the socket body; wherein the terminal member is adapted to be electrically directly connected to the connector, the lamp, and at least one of the

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wires.” As such Applicants have amended claims 1 and 6 accordingly and respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection.

With respect to the prior art rejections, the Examiner suggested amending the independent claims to define the terminal member as a “monolithic” terminal member in order to overcome the rejections of record. As such, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 6 accordingly. This amendment is fully supported by Fig. 1 of the present application, which shows the terminal 23 as a monolithic member.

In contrast, it appears to be the Examiner’s position that Okamoto’s (US 6,343,942) bulb terminal fittings 19 and connector terminal fittings 30, which are separate and distinct structures, together form a “terminal member”.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that APA and Tanigawa do not teach or suggest that a lamp socket or a socket assembly of amended independent claims 1 and 6, which includes a monolithic terminal member within the socket body. For example, the terminals 2 shown in APA Fig. 7 are not connected to the wires 7, but instead the press-connecting terminals 9 provide a connection between the terminals 2 and the wires 7. In addition, the metal wire-contact fitting 23K of Tanigawa, provides a connection between the metal wire W and the bulb, but does not provide an electrical connection with a connector (Tanigawa at Fig. 5).

As such, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of independent claims 1 and 6. In addition, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejections of dependent claims 2-5 and 7-11 at least because of their dependency from one of claims 1 and 6.

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New Claims

In addition, Applicant has added new claims 12 and 13, which are submitted hereinabove, in order to provide alternative claim coverage. New independent claim 12 recites that the claimed socket assembly has a terminal including a press-connecting portion provided at one end and a connector portion at another end, wherein the lamp contacts a portion of the terminal member between the press-connecting portion and the connector portion. Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 12 and 13 are allowable over the cited art.

For example, the APA does not teach or suggest that a press-connecting portion of the terminal is provided within the wire connecting portion of the socket body. Instead, the press-connecting terminal 9 is provided on the lamp body 5. Application at Fig. 7.

In addition, Okamoto does not teach or suggest a terminal having a press-connecting portion provided at one end and a connector portion at another end, wherein the lamp contacts a portion of the terminal member between the press-connecting portion and the connector portion. Instead, in Okamoto the bulb terminal fittings 19 provide a press connection with the wire 41 but do not contact a connector (Okamoto at Fig. 11), and the connector terminal fittings 30 provide a press connection with the wire 41 and project so as to contact terminal fittings of connectors, but do not contact the lamp (Okamoto at 5: 27-33 & Fig. 11).

Conclusion

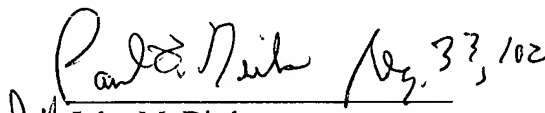
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

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Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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